

Green & Sustainable Transport : Urgent Need of the Hour

Thursday, 5th June, 2014

On the occasion of World Environment Day, The International Centre Goa (ICG), Dona Paula held a talk-cum-interactive session on **“Green and Sustainable Urban Transport System : Urgent Need & Global Trend”** by Mr. Bijon Shaha (ex-Director ETDC Goa).

In this talk Mr.Shaha, an expert in environmental management explained how the progressive urban administrations all over the world are striving to improve the situations of the existing cities, and how transportation in the future new cities will take shape.

By the year 2030 about 60 per cent of the global population will live in cities. After buildings, transport systems, account for 25-30% of total anthropogenic causes of climatic change through green house gases. In addition to carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, most transport-systems, especially the vehicles using fossil fuels pollute our air through carbon monoxide, a poison for any air-breathing animal. nitrogen oxides, leading to smog and acid rain. He implied that the urgent need of the hour is an urban transport systems that fulfills the triple bottom line criteria: economically viable, socially all-inclusive and environmentally ‘green’.

Some modes of transportation rapidly deplete fossil fuel reserve and hugely impact the atmosphere with green-house gas of carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions which are harmful, non-reversible and disastrous for the planet. But there are also others modes of transport that are virtually harmless and 'zero-carbon'.

To maintain the global atmospheric carbon dioxide reduction targets, most of the cities in the world are on an urgent basis promoting and creating infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and efficient public transport system through better technology, planning and management.

Proliferation of internal combustion engine based personal cars, urban sprawl, false sense of glamour associated with cars pose a particular threat and strategies are being continuously evolved to minimize the usage of cars .

Many European cities like Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Copenhagen (Denmark) or Malmo (Sweden) which are compact in design and in their unwillingness to replace their cyclists by car-owners in the nineteen sixties and seventies and have kept these cities much more healthier and cleaner, with minimum carbon emission and are now role models for other

cities to emulate. Initiatives of an efficient public transport like Bus Rapid Transport (BRTs), metro-rails, tramways, cable-cars etc., that use cleaner fuels and greener technologies to reduce carbon emission from our transport, are also being increasingly encouraged, renovated, designed and deployed.

New technologies such as hydrogen fuel cell buses which are being introduced in several cities on an experimental basis because they are zero carbon technologies and all that come from their tailpipes are water and water vapour. They use hydrogen, an element abundantly available on the earth although their extraction from their compound form can sometimes be an economical and technical challenge. Presently they use hydrogen obtainable as a byproduct from some chemical industries. The situation is likely to improve considerably through the research and development that are being carried out in leading institutions.

International and regional cooperation, coordination, benchmarking, competitions, awareness campaigns and awards which enable and facilitate cities across world to learn from the successes as well as setbacks of the other cities and progress towards replacing unsustainable transports by more sustainable transport system.

The aim is continual improvement of the transport-systems of the existing cities, by correcting the past mistakes and using newer and better technologies, and also by planning transportation of future new cities that will be less harmful and more humane.

Mr. Shaha is devoted to creating awareness about some of the latest green technologies and sustainable management strategies. He plans to have more such talks at ICG on the theme of 'Green Cities'.

For further information about ICG programmes, log onto: www.internationalcentregoa.com